1: Jenness--177-178 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 769

"Known graves, even those of relatives, are usually avoided by Eskimos travelling alone, even when death was due to natural causes. Very few natives will voluntarily visit alone the place where a man was killed by violence; they are afraid lest his shade that still hovers in the vicinity may wreak its vengeance on his survivors. When the two Roman Catholic priests were killed near the mouth of the Coppermine river in 1913 the murderers ate small pieces of their livers, believing that this would prevent their shades from taking revenge. (3) An Eskimo broke into two caches belonging to Uloksak and another man, and stole a number of their skins; afterwards the thief hung himself, fearing the owner's revenge, and his corpse was laid out on the ground about a mile from the settlement. The natives hoped that the animals would quickly devour it, and Uloksak set some fox-traps near by. Instead of two foxes, however, he caught two wolves, but one of them gnawed off its foot and limped away. Uloksak, following its track, could see it running in the distance. Suddenly it changed to a man and waved a hand to him, beckoning him to follow, then instantly reverted to a wolf again. He chased it up a cliff and shot it, but the moment the bullet struck its body the wolf gasped 'ah',

"3. The same belief existed in Greenland. See Kirk, p. 45; Rasmussen, People of the Polar North p. 297, 300; Cf. also Nelson, p. 328."

and a voice from inside the cliff cried, 'You too shall die and many of your people.' Uloksak cut off [178] the wolf's legs and crushed its head to make certain that it was dead, then returned to camp, leaving the carcass on the ground. The first news that greeted him was that his wife was dead, and subsequently many others of his party died also.

The Copper Eskimo hardly knows the comforting doctrine that the souls or shades of the dead hover round their living kinsfolk like guardian spirits and protect them from every harm. The shade to them is a malignant being, at least potentially, and its activities know no bounds of time and space. Some remain harmless always, especially the shades of those who worked no evil in their lives; others change to tornrait, and are identified more or less closely with those malignant spirits that never had a normal human existence, though they sometimes assume a human form. Unseen, save when of their own accord they render themselves visible or are revealed to a shaman through his familiar spirit, they haunt the hapless natives night and day, ever ready to seize a favourable opportunity to work them harm; the shade of a man who died in one place may cause the death of another man a thousand miles away. In some vague manner too these shades control the weather and the supply of game. Often a shaman will discover and name the particular shade that is responsible for a man's sickness or ill-luck, or for the scarcity of caribou or seals; then it will be petitioned or intimidated and made

to cease its evil machinations. The Eskimos try to preserve the good will of the shades in various ways. Whenever a caribou is killed scraps of its liver and kidney (and sometimes of its other intestinal organs as well) are thrown to them as an offering with the exclamation tamaizza. (1) So too when a seal is killed a small piece of blubber is left for the shades on the ice. (2) Dease and Simpson noticed that the Copper Eskimos regularly offer an oblation at mealtimes. '(Mr. Dease) took them into his tent and gave them food to eat. A small piece was first broken off, as a sacrifice or oblation, and the remainder made the circuit of their faces before passing into their mouths.'(3) Before drinking, too, the native often tips his bowl and with the prayer tamaizza pours out two or three drops for a libation. These offerings are often omitted at mealtimes, but never in the hunting field when the game is being cut up; and though sometimes the Eskimo may make them only half-consciously, following a stereotyped custom, yet

"1. Cf. Crantz, Vol. I, p. 207."

"2. This was the usual interpretation of the custom. One native, however, said that it pleased the seals, so that others would allow themselves to be caught. As the shades of the dead are supposed to be able to control the supply of seals the two interpretations come to almost the same thing."

"3. Simpson, Discoveries, p. 349."

occasionally there does seem to be some faint sense of gratitude to those unseen powers on whom he believes himself dependent for his daily food."